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HISTORICAL SKETCH  
OF THE  
TOWN OF LINCOLN,  
IN THE  
STATE OF RHODE ISLAND.

COMPILED AND WRITTEN BY

WELCOME A. GREENE,

UNDER THE DIRECTION AND ADVICE OF CHARLES MOSES, ALFRED H.  
LITTLEFIELD AND GEORGE A. KENT, A COMMITTEE APPOINTED BY  
THE TOWN COUNCIL OF LINCOLN TO PROVIDE A HISTORICAL  
SKETCH OF THE TOWN, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE  
RECENT PROCLAMATIONS OF THE PRESIDENT OF  
THE UNITED STATES AND THE GOVERNOR  
OF THE STATE OF RHODE ISLAND.



CENTRAL FALLS, R. I. :  
E. L. FREEMAN & CO., STEAM BOOK, JOB AND LITHOGRAPHIC PRINTERS.  
1876.





*To the Honorable Town Council of the Town of Lincoln, County of Providence, State of Rhode Island :*

GENTLEMEN,—Your honorable Board, agreeable to a resolution of Congress and a proclamation of the President of the United States, and also a resolution of the General Assembly and a proclamation of the Governor of this State, at a meeting held May 27th, appointed the undersigned a committee to make the necessary research and write, or cause to be written, a historical sketch of the town of Lincoln since its formation, in 1871. Your committee finding the duty somewhat arduous, requiring considerable time, more than they were able to devote to the work from the active business of life, employed Welcome A. Greene, Esq., to collect and arrange the necessary statistics. After a careful review of the matter presented,—which we find to be ably and concisely written, and as there is to be no general gathering in the town on this Centennial birth-day of the nation, on which occasion the manuscript might be read,—we take pleasure in presenting to the gentlemen of the Board and to the citizens of the town the following printed sketch, which may be purchased at the cost of publication at the Town Clerk's office.

Respectfully submitted.

CHARLES MOIES,  
ALFRED H. LITTLEFIELD,  
GEORGE A. KENT.

LINCOLN, July 4, 1876.



## HISTORICAL SKETCH.

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**A**LTHOUGH the territory embraced within the limits of our town was the scene of some of the earliest settlements in the State, and one of the hardest fought battles of King Philip's war was finished, if not commenced, within our borders, and, from that time down through the early history of the State, those living within our limits have been noticeable for their energy, intelligence and ability both in war, when we were unfortunate enough to be suffering from that curse, and in peace, when their faculties could be devoted to the more congenial pursuits of agriculture, business and the mechanic arts, yet the history of those earlier times would seem to belong to that portion of our mother town that retains the parental name of Smithfield, and a historical sketch of Lincoln should, strictly speaking, commence at a time now but a few years past.

Up to March 8th, 1871, the territory now comprised in the town of Lincoln had formed part of the town of Smithfield ever since the incorporation of that town, February 20th, 1730-31.

Before its division (in 1871) the old town of Smithfield was the largest town in the State, with a population of over thirteen thousand, and very much diversified in the feelings, business interests and occupations of its inhabitants.

A large section of it was almost exclusively agricultural. Another section had most of its interests pointing towards the manufacturing establishments along the Branch river at the north end of the town.

Another seemed bound by business and social ties to the then new town of Woonsocket, while a fourth, which now forms the town of Lincoln, had most of its business and trade along the lines of the Blackstone and Moshassuck rivers.

Owing to this diversity of occupations and interests, there had been, for many years, more or less discussion as to the advisability of a division of the town, but it was deemed rather a matter for discussion than for action till the year 1871, when, on the twenty-first day of January, at a special town meeting called for that purpose, a vote was had, declaring that the town was in favor of dividing it (the town) into three towns, according to a proposed act of the legislature then on the moderator's table.

A committee on division of the town was appointed, consisting of Hon. Charles Moies, George Kilburn, Esq., Mr. Thomas A. Paine and Mr. Job Shaw. This committee introduced the subject to the legislature at the January session, 1871, and under their able management it was so favorably received that it soon became manifest that a division would be authorized.

As soon as it became apparent that a division was probable, the question of a name for this town became one of importance. There was much division on this subject, and the names of "Smithfield," "South Smithfield," "Lonsdale," "Moshassuck" and others besides "Lincoln" were suggested and had their advocates, but it was finally deemed best by those having the matter in charge to name the town "Lincoln," in commemoration of the late martyred president of the United States.

On the eighth of March, 1871, the Legislature of the State of Rhode Island passed an act authorizing the division of the town of Smithfield, incorporating the new towns thereby formed and fixing the boundaries of the several towns therein interested. Those of Lincoln were as follows, viz.: commencing at a point on the north line of North Providence, where the Douglas Pike (so called) crosses said line, then (bounding the town on the south) running easterly along said line till it reaches the centre of the Blackstone river; thence running with the centre of the Blackstone river (bounding the town on the east) to a point in the centre of said Blackstone river, opposite the centre of the mouth of the Crookfall river; thence (bound-

ing the town on the west) running by and with the centre of the Crookfall river to a point where the road leading from the Providence and Worcester road (so called) past the house of Ephraim Sayles, crosses it; thence southerly in a straight line to the place of beginning.

Charles Moies, Job Shaw, Arlon Mowry and Cyrus Arnold were appointed a committee to run lines and set stone bounds between the several new towns.

These boundaries have remained ever since, and now are those of the town, (although a portion of the then town of North Providence has since been incorporated into the town of Pawtucket, so that this town now bounds on the south in part by North Providence and in part by Pawtucket.) This gave us a territory of a triangular shape, covering about fifteen square miles, with a population of 7,889 persons, and a valuation for State Tax of \$4,406,107.

The young town started in life with no Town Asylum and no Town House—both of those used by the old town of Smithfield going to the present town of Smithfield.

The only inheritance received from the mother town was the sum of twenty-five hundred dollars in cash, the records and archives of the old town—which are now in the Town Clerk's office—and the duty of paying a share of the old town's debt, which was \$26,000, the total debt being \$53,000.

The town by the act was divided into two voting districts, (and has since remained so divided). Voting district number one being the same as voting district number three in the old town of Smithfield, and voting district number two embracing the rest of the town.

This town was to send two Representatives to the Legislature till the next State apportionment.

The town life dates, for the purpose of electing Senator and Representatives to the General Assembly from the first Wednesday in April, 1871, and for all other purposes whatever from the first Monday in June, A. D. 1871.

The first members of the General Assembly elected from the town of Lincoln were, Senator, Hon. Edward L. Freeman; Representatives, Edward A. Brown and Samuel Clark.

There has been no change in the general form of the town

government since its formation. The principal if not the only peculiarity of this town in its government, as distinguished from other towns of this State, is that while it is governed by a Town Council as other towns are, yet the south-easterly portion of it, embracing the most thickly settled part, is specially incorporated by the legislature under the name of "the Central Falls Fire District," with power to elect a Moderator, Clerk, Treasurer, three Assessors and a Collector of Taxes; to elect Firewards and Presidents of Firewards; to order, assess and collect taxes on persons and property within such district for fire extinguishing apparatus and keeping the same in order and using it; to prescribe the duties of firewards and of the citizens of said district in case of conflagration; to provide for suppressing disorders and tumult, for the lighting of streets and maintaining such police force as they may deem necessary. The reason for this is that it was not deemed just for the less thickly settled portions of the town to be taxed for these benefits, that would accrue almost exclusively to this Fire District, and which were not considered necessary or desirable in the other parts of the town, while to this district they were matters of absolute necessity. With this exception, our government is administered by a Town Council, consisting of seven members, who, together with seven Justices of the Peace, and a Town Treasurer, are elected annually by the people, with a Town Clerk, originally elected annually, but in the year 1874 elected for three years, under the changed law of the State. There is also annually chosen, in tax-payers' town meeting, a Moderator to preside at town meetings for the ensuing year.

The Town Council elect all necessary town officers and school committee annually.

The Town Council also acts as the Court of Probate for this town. The President of the Town Council, in addition to his duties as such, having to fulfill those of Chief Justice of the Court of Probate, the other Councilmen fulfilling those of Associate Justices of the same Court.

The first Town Council of Lincoln consisted of Hon. Charles Moies, John A. Adams, Joseph W. Tillinghast, Benjamin Comstock, Stephen Wright, Hazard Sherman and William D. Aldrich, elected the first Tuesday in June, 1871, and all well

known as having the interest of the town deeply at heart, and conspicuous for their honesty, integrity and administrative ability. They chose for the first President of the Town Council the Hon. Charles Moies, (who had been a member of the Town Council of the old town of Smithfield for fifteen years, and been President thereof for ten years of that time). He has been retained in that position ever since, and now holds the same by virtue of the votes of his fellow-citizens and co-councillors, thus showing the large confidence they have in his ability, energy and integrity, and it is no more than his due to say that the continual good order, quiet management, and the general satisfactory manner in which the town government has been carried on is largely due to his continued and continual labor, watchfulness and honest care in its administration.

The first Town Treasurer was Thomas Moies, Esq., in whom the citizens of Lincoln have had that continuous trust and confidence in their financial matters to re-elect him to that important and responsible position each year since, and he at present holds the office and we trust long will.

For the year 1871 the duties of the Town Clerk were performed and the office held by the Hon. Samuel Clark—now General Treasurer of this State—who had for many years performed those duties for the Town of Smithfield.

The Moderator of town meetings for this year was Thomas Moies, Esq.

For the first few months of the new town, Joseph M. Ross, Esq., who had been Trial Justice in the town of Smithfield for some years, held the position of Trial Justice, but in his resignation of the office, on the fourth day of September, 1871, the town early lost a valuable officer. He was succeeded by George F. Crowningshield, Esq., elected on the same day to be his successor, who has since been continually elected and re-elected to the same trust, and which he now holds, to the general satisfaction of our citizens, who all have the greatest confidence in his honor and integrity.

In describing the officers elected by the town I have not deemed it necessary to refer to the seven Justices of the Peace elected each year, as that office seems to be purely an honorary one.

At the first meeting of the Town Council, the Town Ordinances of the old town of Smithfield were passed and established as ordinances of the town of Lincoln; and on June 24th, 1871, Joseph M. Ross, John P. Gregory and Frederick N. Goff were appointed a committee to draw up, codify and report ordinances of the town of Lincoln, which duty they performed in a most satisfactory manner.

As before stated, this town originally had no Town Asylum, or place for the taking care of the unfortunate poor. Recognizing the great Christian duty of charity in the caring for the unfortunate who are unable to care for themselves, and find their lot cast amongst us, the Town Council appointed one of our judicious citizens, Mr. Henry Gooding, as overseer of the poor, and, after arranging with the town of Smithfield for the temporary care of such of the poor as could not be cared for at their own homes, but needed the accommodations of a town asylum, the town officers devoted themselves to securing a proper place for a town asylum.

After much negotiation it was finally decided to purchase the Christopher Kelly place (so called), for \$3,000, and also an adjoining lot from the Lonsdale Company for \$1,000, for a town asylum, and on the thirty-first day of December, 1871, the deeds of the estates were accepted and money ordered to be paid.

The total amount expended in the care of the poor in the first year of the town, over and above the expense of providing a town asylum, was \$2,005.02; and of this was expended in the care of State paupers, or those having no legal settlement in this town, the sum of \$1,083.12, leaving the amount necessary for the care of what may be considered as our home poor only \$921.90, which, for a population of 7,889, is certainly a favorable showing, and indicates a prosperous state among our people generally at that time.

One of the most important cares and duties of the town government is to provide and watch over and keep in efficient operation a sufficient system of schools for the education of the growing generation, that when the time comes for them to assume the rights and fulfill the duties of citizenship they may be able to do so understandingly. Fully appreciating the



importance and necessity of this duty, one of the first acts of the Town Council was to appoint an able and efficient School Committee, consisting of Messrs. George A. Kent, Lysander Flagg and Henry H. Jenckes. They organized by the appointment of George A. Kent (who had been for six years previous a member of the school committee of the old town of Smithfield) as chairman, and so efficiently and satisfactorily did he perform his manifold and arduous duties that he has been a member of the School Committee ever since, and been appointed each year to the position of chairman. Lysander Flagg was chosen Superintendent of Schools, and Henry H. Jenckes Clerk of the Committee.

In the year 1872 the members of the General Assembly chosen from this town were—Senator, Joseph Wood; Representatives, John A. Adams and William H. Davis.

The town officers elected in June, 1872, consisted of—Councillors, Charles Moies, Hazard Sherman, Stephen Wright, William D. Aldrich, Edward A. Brown, Albert P. Carpenter and Jonathan Chace; Town Treasurer, Thomas Moies; Town Clerk, Benjamin A. Reynolds; Moderator of Town Meetings, Thomas Moies; Trial Justice elected by Town Council, George F. Crowningshield.

Mr. Samuel Clark, formerly Town Clerk, had been chosen as General Treasurer of this State, and consequently desired to relinquish the position of Town Clerk, and Mr. Reynolds had been chosen as his successor, but had never qualified himself for the office, and consequently Mr. Clark was obliged to continue to hold over and perform the duties thereof through this year, which, though it was a serious tax on both his time and energy, he did with his accustomed cheerfulness and ability.

The School Committee for this year consisted of George A. Kent, chairman, Lysander Flagg, Superintendent, Henry H. Jenckes, Clerk.

At the first meeting of the Town Council of this year, they voted not to grant licenses to sell liquor within its limits, and it will be a satisfaction to many to be reminded of the fact that the Council of this town has always set its face resolutely against the liquor traffic; always, when it had the power, refusing to grant licenses for the same; always maintaining offi-

cers for the suppression thereof, and doing everything in its power to suppress the hydra-headed monster of intemperance.

Up to 1872 the town had been without any Town House or hall, or even office of its own; the Town Clerk's office having been in a building on the premises of and belonging to the Town Clerk, Mr. Clark, and the Council meetings and Justice Courts having been held in various halls in Central Falls. But in this year a committee, consisting of Charles Moies, Albert P. Carpenter, Jonathan Chace and Henry S. Fairbanks, having the matter in charge, decided upon the present location of the Town House, on Summit, near Broad Street, Central Falls, and the land was purchased from Andrew Jenks, for \$1,812, in September, 1872. The erection of a Town House was immediately commenced, and the same was finished and ready for occupancy in the month of October, 1873, having cost, together with the land, furniture, &c., \$13,485.98.

On October 25th, 1873, it was voted that the Trial Justice Courts be held thereafter in the hall of that building, where they have been held ever since.

In April, 1873, the members of the General Assembly elected from this town consisted of, Senator, Stephen A. Jenks; Representatives, John A. Adams, William H. Davis and Henry S. Fairbanks.

There had been a new State apportionment of representation within the year past, and owing to its advance in population Lincoln was now entitled to three Representatives, instead of two as before.

The town officers elected in June, 1873, consisted of Councillors Charles Moies, John A. Adams, Alfred H. Littlefield, Jonathan Chace, Samuel D. Learned, William H. Aldrich and William B. Monroe; Town Treasurer, Thomas Moies; Town Clerk, William H. Gooding; Moderator of Town Meetings, Thomas Moies. These officers were all duly qualified, and, upon the accession of the new Town Clerk, the town was enabled to dispense with the services of Mr. Samuel Clark, who had been a true and faithful servant both of the old town of Smithfield and the town of Lincoln for many years, until he had been invited by the freemen of Rhode Island to go "up higher," to the position of General Treasurer, and who con-

tinued then, urged on only by a feeling of patriotism, though the duties must have been very irksome and vexatious to him to perform the labors of Town Clerk till one was chosen and duly qualified, a space of over one year.

In June of this year Mr. George F. Crowningshield was elected Trial Justice of the town, which office he would hold, by virtue of the new law of the State, for three years.

The School Committee elected by the Council this June consisted of George A. Kent, chosen chairman, Lysander Flagg, chosen superintendent, and Rev. Clement J. Whipple, chosen clerk. In this year it became necessary, under the changed law of the State, for the School Committee to decide by lot which should hold for one, two or three years, and each incumbent, as his term expired, to be replaced by one holding three years from that date. Lots were drawn, and Rev. Clement J. Whipple was lotted for three years, Lysander Flagg for two years, and George A. Kent for one year.

In the year 1873 there were more internal improvements in the town than any other. The Town House was built; a new iron bridge was built at Valley Falls, and a substantial bridge was built, under the superintendence of George Kilburn, Esq., at Berkeley, to take the place of the tumble-down structure that had been there for years, and a large sum was expended for repairs on the bridge at Ashton. The total amount expended for our share of these two new bridges (one half the expense being borne by the town of Cumberland), was \$10,500.

In addition to the above improvements, and the usual opening and fixing of new streets always going on in a town that is rapidly increasing in population, it became necessary this year to go to large expense in grading and draining Washington street. A committee, consisting of John A. Adams and Alfred H. Littlefield, was appointed to attend to the same. It became obvious to this committee that the only expedient method of providing for the drainage of Washington street was to purchase the land of Edward Dwyer and turn the drainage of a large portion of the street into it, and this was finally done.

These improvements, together with the opening of the new streets necessitated by the growing and spreading of the manufacturing part of the town, were absolutely necessary; and yet

their immediate beneficial influence was confined in great part to the south-easterly and easterly parts of the town.

The increased taxation necessary to pay for such expenses, together with the knowledge of the fact that the town owed heavily in its share of the debt of the mother town of Smithfield, caused a strong feeling to spring up in the more rural part of the town to the effect that they were being dragged into a vortex of debt by the pushing, enterprising, but (they deemed) ill regulated spirit of the manufacturing population of the Central Falls Fire District. The inhabitants of the latter, at the same time, had, many of them, the feeling that they could not get their needed improvements authorized and performed by the Council so fast as their best interests required, and that they never should be able to do so as long as they were tied to the excessively conservative spirit of their rural co-citizens.

The result of these feelings was that petitions were drawn up in various parts of the town, petitioning the legislature to set off portions of the town of Lincoln to adjacent towns,—principally to set off the village of Central Falls to the town of Pawtucket.

Party spirit ran high upon this subject, but the advocates of the different plans did not succeed in infecting the legislature with their views, where a more conservative spirit prevailed, and the different projects for a division of the town died an easy death in the legislative portfolios.

In the year 1874, it was finally ascertained what our proportion of the town debt of Smithfield would be, and the Town Treasurer was, on the thirty-first day of January, 1874, authorized to hire \$25,000, under the direction and approval of Charles Moies and John A. Adams, for the purpose of liquidating the debt. The debt to be paid was \$26,000. The committee and Treasurer proceeded to hire what money was needed and with it pay the debt.

The members of the General Assembly chosen in the month of April, 1874, for the ensuing year, were—Senator, John A. Adams; Representatives, Henry S. Fairbanks, Edward L. Freeman and William H. Davis.

The town officers elected in June, 1874, were—Concillors,

Charles Moies, John A. Adams, Alfred H. Littlefield, William J. Hood, Samuel D. Learned, William H. Aldrich and William B. Monroe; Town Treasurer, Thomas Moies; Town Clerk, William H. Gooding, elected for three years under the new law; Moderator of Town Meetings, George A. Kent.

On June 15th, Mr. Frederick N. Goff was authorized to serve as Trial Justice in the absence or inability of George F. Crowningshield.

Mr. George A. Kent, whose term of service in the School Committee expired in June of this year, was re-elected for the term of three years.

Mr. Lysander Flagg, who had served with great ability on the School Committee since the incorporation of the town, retired from that board this year, and his place was filled by the Rev. James H. Lyon, who, on the first meeting of the committee for organization, was elected Superintendent. The board was otherwise organized as the year before.

In the autumn of this year the question of dividing the town was resurrected again in a new shape, and appeared in the form of petitions to set off a portion of the villages of Valley Falls, Lonsdale, Ashton and Albion to the town of Cumberland, of which notice was given to the Town Council on October 31st, 1874, that it would be presented at the ensuing January session of the Legislature; and also two petitions to set off a portion of the town of Lincoln to the town of North Providence, of which the Town Council was notified on November 28th, that they would be presented at the ensuing January session of the Legislature.

There did not seem to be so much enthusiasm on the matter of division this year as in the year before. This was probably on account of the feeling among the people, who had suffered uneasiness at the rapid increase of the debt, that they had succeeded in passing a vote at the last town meeting (June, 1874,) that no moneys should be expended, in any department of appropriation, beyond the amounts specifically appropriated, and that they had just taxed themselves very heavily to be able to pay up the debt. So a general feeling had spread abroad that a conservative policy was the best, and there was no feeling of indignation in the town generally when these projects were suf-

ferred to die in the Legislature in the same manner as those of the year before.

There have since been no attempts made to carry out this further division of the town, and we hope that the statements hereinafter contained, showing the rapid increase in wealth, population, highway and other facilities of the people, will satisfy all our townsmen that we had better be slow to change our position in the State. A proper blending of the conservative with the most enterprising classes is more conducive to the general welfare of the town than to have our population made up too exclusively of either class.

In the year 1873 we had been troubled to an unusual extent, chiefly among the operative class living in the villages on the Blackstone river, by the prevalence of small-pox: In the winter of 1873-4 it grew to be a very serious scourge, but it was not till the winter of 1874-5 that it reached its height. At that time it attained to such a degree of prevalence as, in the neighborhood of Manville, to cause what might almost be called a small-pox panic, and it became necessary to stop the public schools in that district on account of its rapid spread. The town officers had done everything that lay in their power to fight the dread disease with all the appliances of modern medicinal skill, but were much impeded in their good endeavors by the willfulness and ignorance of a small class of the population—mostly French Canadian factory operatives—to which class the cases were almost exclusively confined, and who caused much trouble by concealing the fact of the disease in their families and refusing to be vaccinated.

Finally, when it became absolutely necessary, a rigid system of examination and compulsory vaccination was adopted and insisted on, without exceptions, and by its aid the prevalence of the disease was overcome, but not till it had cost the town the sum of \$6131.59 in money, the loss of many lives and much mental and bodily suffering in the community. The disease has not been prevalent in this town since.

It had long been felt that the Town Council had not, under the law, sufficient power in the matter of laying out streets. A law had been made giving to the Town Councils of North Providence, Cranston, Woonsocket and Pawtucket the powers

in those respective towns that were felt to be needed by the Town Council in this, and in December, 1874, the Town Council stated the necessity of the amendment of the law so as to give the same powers to the Council in Lincoln as in these other towns, and requested that a petition to the Legislature be drawn to so amend the law. The law was so amended, June 10th, 1875.

The members of the General Assembly elected in April, 1875, for the ensuing year from the town were—Senator, John A. Adams; Representatives, Henry S. Fairbanks, Edward L. Freeman and Elisha S. Aldrich.

The town officers elected in June, 1875, were—Councillors, Charles Moies, John A. Adams, Alfred H. Littlefield, William J. Hood, Samuel D. Learned, William H. Aldrich and William B. Monroe; Town Treasurer, Thomas Moies; Moderator of Town Meetings, Thomas Moies.

Daniel Pearce, Esq., was elected by the Council to perform the duties of Trial Justice, in the absence or inability of George F. Crowningshield, during the ensuing year.

The Rev. James H. Lyon's term as member of the School Committee having expired, he was re-elected for three years.

The School Committee organized by choosing the same officers as in the year previous.

On the 31st of July, 1875, the Town Council again declared the sentiments of the town's people generally in voting that no licenses be granted to sell intoxicating liquors in this town for the year ensuing.

During the January session of the Legislature, 1876, there was a new apportionment by the State of the Representative delegations of the towns in the General Assembly, and owing to our increased population our delegation was increased in number from three to four, to date from the next election.

The members of the General Assembly elected in April, 1876, for the ensuing year from Lincoln were—Senator, Hon. Jonathan Chace; Representatives, Thomas Moies, Alfred H. Littlefield, Elisha S. Aldrich and Edward L. Freeman.

It will be noticed that the Hon. Edward L. Freeman, besides being Senator for the first year of the town, has been elected to the position of Representative for three consecutive years.

This honorable record is of itself a valuable guarantee of his abilities and the trust reposed in him by his fellow-citizens, but when we add to that the facts that he had for three years represented the old town of Smithfield in the General Assembly, and that for two years of the time for which he has represented Lincoln he has performed the onerous duties of Speaker of the House of Representatives in such an able and impartial manner as to call forth the plaudits and commendations of all parties, both his political friends and foes, and a re-nomination for the office for a third year (which he declined to accept), and take into consideration the general high standing which the delegation from Lincoln has always held in the Legislature, we find ample reason for stating that our delegations to the Legislature have been made up of men whom the people ought to delight to honor and who are an honor to their town.

The town officers elected in June, 1876, were—Councillors, Charles Moies, John A. Adams, Alfred H. Littlefield, Samuel D. Learned, William H. Aldrich, William B. Monroe and Benjamin Comstock; Town Treasurer, Thomas Moies; Moderator of Town Meetings, Samuel Clark.

The term of office of George F. Crowningshield, as Trial Justice, having expired, he was re-elected for three years by the Town Council, and Josephus R. Merriam was appointed for the ensuing year to serve and perform the duties of Trial Justice in his absence or inability to serve.

The term of office of Rev. C. J. Whipple, as a member of the School Committee, having expired, he was re-elected for the term of three years by the Town Council.

Under the vigilant care and guardianship of these, our town rulers, our municipal affairs are conducted, as they always have been, with rigid scrutiny, honest attention, and what is the crucial test of their ability, success.

There are certain departments of our town organizations and interests of our citizens, an account of which cannot well be woven into the sketch of the general history of the town, and it will be given here, as an account of them is needed to show conclusively whether our short lived town is a success or a mistake.



## HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT.

In the year 1871, there were, by estimation, about fifty miles of roads in this town. Now there are over fifty-four and a half miles, besides a large number of streets laid out and travelled on but not yet accepted by the town.

In the course of five years the sum of \$13,519.80 has been spent on the opening and keeping in repair of the highways and bridges of the town, and their condition generally is good, better than before the old town of Smithfield was divided.

## POOR DEPARTMENT.

In addition to what has already been said it only remains to say that in the course of five years, three of them years of unusual hardship and suffering to the poorer classes, it has only been necessary to expend \$15,239.16 in the care of the poor in our town, and \$5,359.35, or thirty-five per cent., of that has been for the care of State paupers.

The money has mostly been spent under the efficient eye and care of Mr. Henry Gooding, and the system has been to give, so far as possible, temporary aid at their homes to those needing it, thereby saving them from the fancied degradation of being sent to the poor house, and fostering and sustaining, so far as possible, in the unfortunate poor a spirit of independence.

## SCHOOL DEPARTMENT.

As before stated, one of the first acts of the first Town Council of Lincoln was to appoint a School Committee. Fortunately we had a good system of schools, organized under the old town of Smithfield, and they have been kept up and their standard generally and gradually raised in the last five years.

From June 1st, 1871, to April 30th, 1876, we have expended (besides the sums that may have been raised in the districts by district taxes) the sum of \$74,157.43, paid out by the Town Treasurer on account of schools.

We have 39 Teachers, 12 School Districts and 11 School houses. Our schools stand high. The committee in their annual reports have nothing to say but in commendation of the *schools*, (that is of the teachers and scholars attending), but it

would seem that we suffer from a cause almost inseparable from a large manufacturing population, namely, that the poorer operatives cannot be made to understand that their children's education is of more importance than what little wages they are able to earn; so that too many children of school age go to the factory and too few go to school. But our efficient School Committee are alive to the exigencies of the occasion, and in words of lively eloquence are calling (in their annual reports) on our people to awake from this neglect of the rising generation, and we confidently believe that this spot on the fair fame of our town will ere long be wiped away.

#### TOWN DEBT.

Owing to the necessities for the expenditure of money heretofore referred to, the town found itself, in 1873, in debt, owing a Lincoln town debt of about \$12,000, and on account of the old town of Smithfield debt, a then unknown amount.

It was considered that enough money would be raised by the tax of \$1.20 per \$100 in that year to pay off the Lincoln town debt, but, owing to the large number of outstanding claims against the town that had not then been presented, on the 30th of April, 1874, the town still found itself with a Lincoln town debt of about \$5,300, and its portion of the old Smithfield town debt, ascertained to be \$26,000, to be paid.

Resolutely putting their shoulders to the wheel, our citizens pressed onwards through the heavy track of debt, paving their way out by heavy taxation, assessing this year a tax of \$1.00 per \$100, and by April 30th, 1875, had paid up the Lincoln town debt, all but \$15,000 of the old Smithfield debt, had paid an unexpected call for \$3,600 on account of small-pox cases, and had \$7,614.73 cash on hand, with orders outstanding for about \$2,000.

A tax of eighty cents on every \$100 was ordered in June, 1875, and on the 30th of April, 1876, the town had paid, in addition to its ordinary expense, an extraordinary one of \$4,114.13, (a judgment for land damage, in opening a street, against the town), paid \$10,000 of the old Smithfield debt, owed in all kinds of demands (including balance of old Smithfield debt) not to exceed \$5,800, and had a cash balance on

hand of \$4,363.72, leaving the actual net debt less than \$1,500. Therefore we may say that we are practically out of debt—that that heavy burden has been cast off, and if our town continues to be as well and economically ruled in the future as it has been in the past, we may look forward to a long era of light taxation.

#### VITAL STATISTICS.

The number of births in Lincoln in the five years since its incorporation have been 1,512; average per annum, 302. Number of deaths in same time, 826; average per annum, 165. Number of marriages in same time, 298; average per annum, 59 2-5.

#### GENERAL STATISTICS.

But the question will be asked with interest, has the town advanced or retrograded in wealth and population during these five years?

I have gathered a few statistics which will show better than general words the extent of our changes from the position we stood in in 1871 and where we stand now.

It should be remembered when considering the following statistics, that the last three years of the five covered by them have constituted a period unexampled in the history of this century as one of business depression and loss; that failure after failure of business concerns—many of them heretofore considered as among the most solidly reliable of their kind in the country—has been the order of the daily affairs of our land, and if a community did not go backward instead of rapidly, or even at all, increase in wealth and population, it would be a matter of congratulation.

In view of these facts, the steady increase of wealth and population of our town seem much more than the same advance would be in ordinary times a matter of felicitation and an evidence that the business interests of the town are founded upon a rock so firmly that no ordinary business storms—none of any kind that we shall probably see in our day—are likely to shake them down and spread disaster and ruin among our citizens.

We have seen that in March, 1871, we had a population of

7,889, with a valuation for State tax of \$4,406,107. In September, 1871, the Town Assessors' valuation was,

Real Estate, . . . . .	\$3,811,000	
Personal Estate, . . . . .	1,425,000	
	<u>          </u>	\$5,236,100

## IN SEPTEMBER, 1872.

Real Estate, . . . . .	\$4,407,500	
Personal Estate, . . . . .	1,505,700	
	<u>          </u>	\$5,913,200

## IN SEPTEMBER, 1873.

Real Estate, . . . . .	\$4,782,100	
Personal Estate, . . . . .	1,681,900	
	<u>          </u>	\$6,464,000

## IN SEPTEMBER, 1874.

Real Estate, . . . . .	\$5,143,800	
Personal Estate, . . . . .	1,740,400	
	<u>          </u>	\$6,884,200

## IN SEPTEMBER, 1875.

Real Estate, . . . . .	\$5,471,450	
Personal Estate, . . . . .	1,743,600	
	<u>          </u>	\$7,215,050

These are official figures, but there has been a large increase since the last valuation, and a low estimate for the present time (July 4th, 1876,) would be,

Real Estate, . . . . .	\$6,050,000	
Personal Estate, . . . . .	1,743,600	
	<u>          </u>	\$7,793,600

Showing an increase in a little over five years of 76.88 per cent.

In order to show that this estimate for the present value is within the bounds of reason, I will state that our present valuation for State tax is,

Real Estate, . . . . .	\$6,488,395	
Personal Estate, . . . . .	2,097,628	
	<u>          </u>	\$8,586,023

an increase of 94.86 per cent. over the valuation of 1871.

Our population has increased from 7,889 in 1871, to 11,569 in 1875, and is probably considerably larger to-day.

In 1871 there were in our town 1,015 houses. In 1875 there were 1,487 houses, a very large proportion of which are owned by those who live in them.

The number of families in 1871 was about 1,517. In 1875 there were 2,222 families.

In the various branches of cotton manufacture—our largest manufacturing interest—we had, in 1871, seven establishments, using 1,655 horse power, part steam and part water power; employing 2,333 persons; paying annually, as wages, \$713,500; using annually materials amounting in value to \$1,309,472, and producing annually goods to the value of \$2,610,640.

In 1875 we had six establishments, using 4,847 horse power, part steam and part water power; employing 3,525 persons; running 294,852 spindles—making more spindles than any other town in the State; paying annually, as wages, \$1,207,753; using annually materials amounting in value to \$1,713,948.80; producing annually 10,922,547 yards of print cloths, 14,867,126 yards of sheetings, shirtings and twilled goods, 700,000 dozen spools of cotton, with a total production in value of \$3,285,606.

(The relatively small increase in value of finished goods is owing to the depressed state of the market, manifesting itself in the value of goods.)

Since the above figures (kindly furnished by Dr. Snow from the Rhode Island census of 1875,) were obtained, there have been erected two large mills, one for making cotton cloth and one for cotton thread, employing, in the aggregate, over 700 horse power, within our town limits.

In the Bleaching business we had, in 1871, two establishments, using 470 horse power; employing 295 persons, and bleaching fifty millions yards of cloth annually. Now we have two establishments, employing 500 persons; using 1,500 horse power, and bleaching one hundred and forty-three million yards of goods annually.

In the woolen manufacturing we have one establishment, employing 130 hands, using 110 horse power, using annually 450,000 pounds of wool, and producing annually 350,000 yards of cloth.

The number of Tanneries in 1871 was one, using fifty horse power, employing fifteen men, and making annually \$100,000 worth of goods. In 1876 we have two establishments, using 150 horse power, employing 110 men, and making annually \$450,000 worth of goods.

Our Gas companies in 1871 numbered two, used ten horse power, employed twenty-two men, and made 18,012,000 cubic feet of gas annually. In 1876 we have two, using thirty-two horse power, employing twenty-nine men, and making 34,308,000 cubic feet of gas per annum.

Among the industries peculiar to this town we have the Pawtucket Hair Cloth Company, running 450 looms, using 150 horse power, employing 125 hands, paying in wages \$51,500 annually, and making 425,000 yards of hair cloth per annum. This is the only establishment in this country making hair cloth by the use of automatic hair weaving looms, and this company own the patents for the only looms of the kind in the world. The only places outside of Lincoln, R. I., where these looms are used are in Pawtucket (where about seventy-five are used in making crinoline and padding goods) and a place in England where about 160 looms are employed in making hair cloth. With these exceptions, all the hair cloth made in the world is woven in hand looms, making a much inferior article at a much greater expense.

We have also a monopoly of the Lime business in this State, having three manufacturers, The Dexter Limerock Company, The Harris Limerock Company, and Stephen Wright, who, together, employ about forty men, run from six to eight kilns, and make from 40,000 to 50,000 casks of Lime per annum.

The Lime manufacturers in this town are not simply the only ones in this State, but the Lime made here is of a superior quality and commands in the market a higher price than any other lime, wherever manufactured.

We have within our town a File manufactory—the American File Company, employing 150 persons and making 1,080,000 files per annum; one Curled Hair Company; one Iron Foundry; one Brass Foundry; two Printing Houses; three Spool manufactories; two large slaughtering establishments, and numerous smaller manufacturing establishments. In fact the great busi-

ness of the town is manufacturing of one kind or another. Of our whole population we had employed in various manufactories, in 1871, 3,479 persons; in 1875, 4,353. In 1871 we used 3,005 horse power; in 1875, 5,604. In 1871 we used materials to the value of \$2,350,146; in 1875, \$2,894,269. In 1871 we paid in wages \$1,134,136; in 1875, \$1,593,012. In 1871 we produced finished goods to the value of \$4,718,910; in 1875, \$5,168,286, (a very much less total value than it would be were the market in the same state as in 1871). And since these statistics were taken we have added a large mill for the production of cotton cloth, employing 150 hands, and a large mill for making thread, using over 600 horse power, to our resources.

And while our main business is manufacturing, our agricultural interests are not by any means contemptible.

We have 139 Farms, of a cash value of \$736,500; farm implements to the value of \$17,639; 524 acres of ploughed land; 284 horses; 600 milch cows; 77 working oxen; 189 other cattle; 17 sheep and lambs; 271 swine.

The farming people find a ready market for their produce among the manufacturing people.

Besides the branches of business above specially spoken of, we have within our town one ledge, producing an excellent faced stone for building; one hundred and fifty retail places of business; six Physicians; two Law offices and twelve Churches.

The moral record of our people generally stands well. Since the town was organized there has been but one murder committed within its limits, and but very few crimes demanding the attention of a tribunal higher than our Justice Court.

Our people are essentially a peaceable, law-abiding class; taking that which they are able to earn and resting content therewith, and not striving to deprive their neighbor wrongfully of his own.

Thus we find ourselves this fourth day of July, A. D. 1876. Thus we realize, indeed, that "Peace hath her victories as well as war;" that to so guide and govern the administration of the town as to promote its growth, increase its business and the comforts of its inhabitants; to care for the educational interests

of the young, to preserve the physical health of the people, to strive to preserve in them their moral purity, are acts worthy of a higher praise than carrying blood-stained guidons on a field of battle. Yet we would not be understood as casting discredit on the remembrance of those who fought and fell that we might have an opportunity to gather here in this centennial celebration.

Though the life of our town has been so short and peaceful that we could not, if we would, weave a blood-spotted laurel into its civic crown, yet we remember with reverence and love those martyrs of old Smithfield, who were then our co-citizens, whose lives exhaled in the noxious vapors of war that we might enjoy the pure air of peace, and we shall ever look upon with pride, and delight to honor, the many survivors of the stern conflicts of war who, though then citizens of Smithfield, went from our limits, and were our friends and neighbors.

But it is with the earnest wish and prayer for peace in all future time, and that those who, in the future, have the guidance of the destinies of our town, may have wisdom, patriotism and ability to guide them aright through the trials of coming years, and that the next centennial fourth of July will show a record for the town of Lincoln which we now scarcely dare hope for, that we close this brief sketch.













